

**BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES**

Date: March 19, 2015

Meeting No.: 201

Project: 21st Century Schools Initiative-
Fort Worthington Elementary/Middle School

Phase: Discussion #2

Location: East Oliver Street, Kenhill Avenue and East Hoffman Street

PRESENTATION:

Brent Miller of MD Stadium Authority briefly discussed several planning and community issues raised in Discussion #1, namely amount of building square footage for community uses, location of the bio-retention area and study of potential rodent concerns and realignment with North Kenwood Street. Paul Bradshaw, Architect from Grimm and Parker provided a complete presentation of changes to the project since first introduced to the planning staff and UDARP.

The proposed new building complex provides approximately 104,000 square feet for a student count of 696 in Grades K-8. The building plan also includes major space allocation for community uses including meeting space and recreation center amenities. As recapped by Paul Bradshaw, there were 5 issues that the school team and architect wanted to address based on the initial discussion meeting.

These are:

1. Location of Bio-retention Area
2. Alignment of Building entrance responding to the street grid
3. Design from “outside in”
4. Building Fenestration
5. Main entrance at East Hoffman should be more gracious and welcoming

The architects studied the location of the bio-retention area. Topography constraints resulted in a decision to maintain the location as originally shown. Landscape and planting choices will be reviewed to enhance the area, prevent any rodent issues and relate the area more harmoniously with the building and playing fields.

The pedestrian access alignment through the building from E. Oliver Street to E. Hoffman Street has been redesign to provide a straight axis from the crosswalk from these streets.

The overall Landscape Plan has been designed to integrate with the building components as well as the play area, sports court and natural turf play field. The Landscape Plan is thoughtful in providing important landscape design elements to complement the building such as low maintenance plants for the bio-retention area, a terraced seating area and a brick retaining wall with plantings. In addition, the intentions of the Landscape Plan are to provide educational opportunities and interaction for the students such as a Rain Garden and outdoor learning areas.

Based on prior comments, the architects reworked the glass façade of the entrance along E. Oliver Street to soften the connection with a canopy for the view from the community to the school building. The 2 color brick facing choices along with softer yellow panels seeks to mute the building’s integration into the long time community.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PANEL:

The presentation by the architecture team has shown the panel a very well developed building proposal. This led to several questions from the panel members relating to the buildings as well as to the site plan as follows:

1. Rear Entrance still appears challenging? Yes the recessive entrance is still under study.
2. Status of the bridge connecting to the bio-retention area has been removed? Yes
3. Use of the Roof Space? Could be used for outdoor learning space? The roof area has not been fully design. It is the intention of the building to be solar ready, maybe a light opening glass covered, down through the roof along the corridor entrance?

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY:

Pastor Beatrice Bastiany, Berea Neighborhood Association spoke on behalf of the community. The community's greatest concern is the availability of the facility to be the community's new recreation center. The current gyms and recreation center is not be fully replaced with the new school. The community has a substantive need for recreational amenities, both indoor and outdoor for all ages, especially the elderly and youngest members of the community.

COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL:

The Panel thanked the School Board representatives as well as the architect for being responsive to the original comments. The team clearly addressed many of the original concerns. The panel especially wanted to reinforce that the entrances are a critical aspect of the design. They should be welcoming and are a great opportunity to embrace the whole community with the new school building.

Overall, the Panel found the design development strong and thorough. The panel greatly appreciated the level of design achieved in the documents presented. The panel viewed this design proposal as sensitive to community needs while raising overall design standards of new schools to be built in the City of Baltimore to serve future youth and educational professionals. Moving forward, the team should consider:

- Creating a stronger threshold at the E. Oliver Street entrance. The recessed entrance caused some pause and the team discussed additional ways to create a threshold and provide more defensible space.
- Investigate additional future expansion space or outdoor learning space at the second level off of the currently planned Art Room. Are there ways that the new building can be constructed to allow for future multipurpose/community space above the proposed one level below should it be needed.

Attending:

Brent Miller, Dawn Sanders – MD Stadium Authority

Paul Bradshaw, Ricardo Seijo - Grimm +Parker

Julius Henson – Berea Eastside Assoc.

Kate Acker – City Schools Partner

Will Doane – City Schools

Bob Wall – Recreation and Park

Tony Cortea – STV

Michael Fisher, Steve McCurdy – Site Resources, Inc.

Steve Cauria – SP Architects

Beatrice Bastiany – Berea Eastside Neighborhood Friendly Neighborhood Assoc.

Dr. Judith Meany*, Messr. Gary Bowden, Rich Burns, David Haresign and David Rubin - UDARP Panel

Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Sara Paraniham, Katie-Rose Imbriano, Reni Lawal –Planning Department